

SAMPLE THE SWORD OF THE LORD

And they cried, The Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." Judges 7:20

EDITED BY JOHN R. RICE
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"But The Spirit Departed"

BY REVEREND LENNARD DARBEE
Pastor, Gatewood Baptist Church, Seattle, Washington

(Sermon preached in Grand Opera House, Chicago; broadcast on WJJD, Christian Business Men's Committee, Tuesday, January 28, 1941. Stenographically reported.)

Turn with me in the Word of God to First Samuel the 16th chapter, starting with verse 12:

"And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him; for this is he."

"13. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah."

"14. But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him."

The church of the Lord Jesus Christ must deal in the supernatural in order to fulfill the mission of Christ. Men must be born again with power that is not their own. It is not a mental conception but a vital inward dynamic experience. Now only the Spirit of the living God can empower a man to preach or to teach or to minister as he ought to do in Christian work. So it is vital that you and I be under the anointing and in the fire of the Spirit of the living God.

Now, therefore, today we are going to consider why the Spirit of God came upon David and why the Spirit of God left Saul. Let us just stop for a minute and compare the two men. Physically there is no comparison. Saul stood head and shoulders above all the people, so physically David was inferior.

In the second place, morally David was inferior. He committed a great sin by taking another man's wife and committing adultery with her, but we find no such blot on the record of Saul. So then physically and morally Saul was a superior man. When it came to modesty, as we find Samuel anointing him king, we find Saul hiding in the stuff. So he was a modest man. When it came to generosity, we find these words: "Now, Saul, we are going to kill all your enemies," and Saul said, "Not a man shall be put to death today." So he was generous.

His bravery was proved when he rescued the men of Jabesh-gilead. So in all these things Saul was a superior man to David, yet somehow and for some reason the Spirit of God left Saul, but the Spirit of God came upon David.

Now if you open the Word of

Wisdom

I took the best of my youth
For pleasures all my own—
Forgetting I must some day reap
The chaff that I had sown.

I took the best of every day,
When mind was fresh and keen—
To do the special things I loved,
The thing that would be seen.

My youth soon fled, and I, alone,
Reaped sorrow for my pleasure;
The things I loved to do for show
Proved but an empty treasure.

But when I gave my best to God,
My life—the morning hour—
I found His pleasure was my own,
His grace, my shining tower!

—Mildred Allen Jeffery.



REV. LENNARD DARBEE

God, you will find that the Spirit of God never comes upon a sermon. The Spirit doesn't come upon songs. He doesn't come upon a service. Jesus Christ said, "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon YOU," and so He comes upon men, not upon what they do. Therefore what God wants is a yielded life, not yielded talents. The first thing we must do is to yield our lives unreservedly to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us consider the first reason why the Spirit of God left Saul. He disobeyed God and in that hour of disobedience, Samuel stood before him and said, "Saul, Saul, why haven't you hearkened to the voice of God?" He was trying to bring God in another way. Samuel said, "It can't be done. To obey is better than to sacrifice." And so the first reason why the Spirit of God left Saul was the matter of disobedience. If you and I look around us today we will see rebellion against authority everywhere. Men no longer want to obey anything or anyone, even though it be God.

Turn to the marriage ceremony. The minister of God, with the Bible to back him up, no longer dare use the word *obey*.

The other day I performed a wedding ceremony in Seattle, Washington. A very beautiful young bride stood in front of me. I said, "Do you take this man to be your lawfully wedded husband, to love, honor, and OBEY?" and another preacher sitting in on the ceremony almost had a heart attack. He came to me afterwards and said, "Boy, you scared me. I didn't think the modern girl would ever promise to obey anybody."

I replied, "Listen here. That is the Word of the living God and so long as I preach and conduct a marriage ceremony the girl is going to promise to obey."

He asked, "Suppose she doesn't do it."

And I said, "Brother, I have never seen a girl who would get up to that point in the marriage ceremony and back out. But if the time should come when a girl refused

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"GARY—A Christian At College"

See thrilling weekly Christian story strip beginning this week on back page. Look for it each week.

"Churches" and "The Church"

Local Congregations; When Israel Was a Church; The Mob That Was a Church; Who Is In the True Church; Why It Cannot Be Denomination, Must Include Old Testament Saints; Proof It Was Not Begun At Pentecost

BY EVANGELIST JOHN R. RICE

In modern English the word *church* is sometimes used about a local congregation, sometimes is used about a church house, and very, very often is used about a denomination, as "the Roman Catholic Church." In the Bible the word does not have this variety of meaning, but is very simple. The New Testament was written in Greek and the Greek word for church is *ekklesia*. Always in the Bible the word *church* means "a called out assembly" or "called out ones." The word is used in the Bible for many different called out assemblies, sometimes Christians, sometimes not; sometimes on earth, sometimes in Heaven, but it always means a called out group. The word *church* in the Bible never refers to a denomination. The Catholic denomination is not a church, nor the Baptist denomination, nor any other. The word *church* never means a group of churches. In the Bible the word *church* is used in the following ways: (1) It is used of Israel in the wilderness before Mount Sinai. (2) It is used to designate a mob of idolaters at Ephesus. (3) It is used for local assemblies of Christians, or congregations. (4) The word *church* in the Bible sometimes refers to that great assembly of Christians to be called out at the second coming to meet Christ in the air and to be assembled in Heaven.

I. Israel At Mount Sinai Was A Church

The word *church* is used of Israel in the wilderness before Mount Sinai. Acts 7:38 says:

"This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us."

Israel was really a called out group, called out of Egypt, and assembled in the wilderness, and was literally a church. The same Greek word *ekklesia* is used as it is used everywhere else in the Bible. This called out assembly, most of them quite certainly unbelievers since practically all of them died in the wilderness for their sins, was yet a church. The word translated church throughout the Bible simply means a called out assembly.

We call attention to this verse of Scripture to help you get the Bible meaning of the word church. Do not be afraid of anything that is in the Bible. Israel at Mount Sinai, saved, lost, grown folks, young people and babies, were all called a church by the Word of God. That was not a Christian church, but it was a church, a called out assembly.

II. The Mob of Idolaters at Ephesus

The Greek word *ekklesia*, translated "church" everywhere else in the Bible, is also used to designate a mob of idolaters at Ephesus. In Acts 19, verses 32, 39, and 41, the word assembly is really a translation of the Greek word *ekklesia* for church. That mob, called out by Demetrius, to do away with Paul, Gaius and Aristarchus, was

a called out assembly, and therefore a church. Check up in Young's Analytical Concordance, or the Greek New Testament, and see that the word "assembly" in these verses is translated from *ekklesia*, the Greek word everywhere used for church. A called out assembly is a church.

This mob at Ephesus was not a church of believers in Christ, not a church of Christians, but nevertheless, in the language of the Bible, it was a church. In the English translation the word is "assembly" but it should have been translated "church," as the same word is so translated in every other single case in the Bible except these three times, in Acts 19:32-41. If we read into the word "church" more than the Bible means by the word, then we fail to understand the Bible teaching on the subject. It is interesting that in the same chapter is the only case in the Bible where any word is wrongly translated church. "Robbers of churches" in verse 37 is a single word in the Greek language, meaning, "robbers of temples" and has no connection with the word "church" whatever. The translators had already begun to use the word church for a church building and so made this mistake. In the Bible the word "church" never means a building, but simply a called out assembly.

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III. Local Congregations of Christians Are Churches

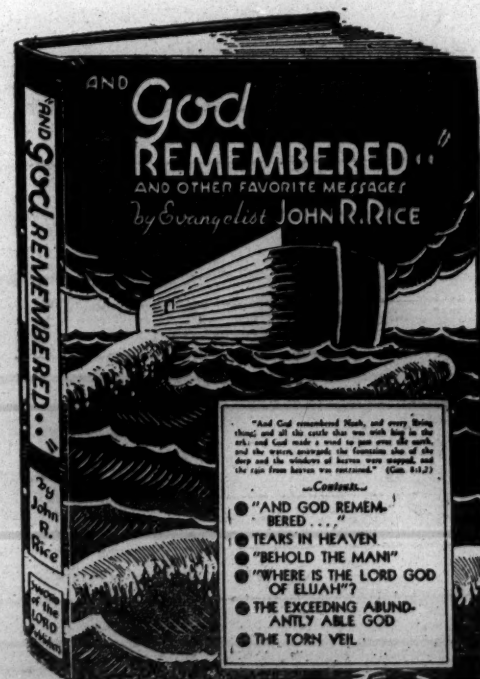
The most common use of the word "church" in the New Testament is of local assemblies of Christians or congregations. We are told about "the churches of Galatia" (Gal. 1:2), "the seven churches which are in Asia" (Rev. 1:4), etc. Every local congregation of Christians was a called out assembly. About ninety times in the New Testament the word "church" means a local congregation of Christians. It is important to note that a called out assembly of Christians was a church whether they had pastors or deacons or not, whether there was any church roll or not, or church covenant or articles of faith. The word "church" means a called out assembly. Many times it referred to called out assemblies of Christians.

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"Churches" and "The Church"

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

"Church" Means One Congregation, Not Many

Be sure to notice that a local congregation of Christians was never called "a part" of the church. Speaking of different congregations of Christians, the Bible always uses the plural term "churches," not the singular term "the church." The Holy Spirit did not speak of "the church" in the province of Galatia, but of "the churches of Galatia." It did not speak of "the church" in the cities of Asia, but of the seven "churches" of Asia. Every local congregation is a separate church, and these congregations are never put together to form one body called a church in Bible terminology. A group of churches forming a denomination does not make one large church. They are still churches. In Bible times they did have local churches, but they did not have a denomination. The local assemblies were churches. Had there been a denomination, it would NOT have been a church in the Bible sense, a called out assembly.

For example, it is thoroughly unscriptural to say, "I joined the Baptist church." There are many Baptist churches but no such thing as "THE BAPTIST CHURCH," referring to the whole group of Baptists. One joins a particular Baptist church, not a whole system or denomination of Baptists. A church is a called out assembly, not a denomination.

Of course one may join a denomination. If so, it would be proper to say, "I joined the Methodist denomination." Or it would be proper to say of a local congregation, "I joined Grace Methodist Church." A denomination is not a church and a church is not a denomination, in the Bible sense. Our modern use of the term in this matter is not Scriptural.

A local assembly of Christians is a church in the Bible use of the term, irrespective of its doctrine or organization. The Bible clearly gives the doctrines that New Testament churches ought to teach and the practices they ought to follow. But New Testament churches which were wrong in doctrine and practice were still called churches. For instance, the church at Corinth had the tongues heresy, some of

the members got drunk at the Lord's Supper, and they were guilty of many hurtful divisions. Yet they were called "the church of God which is at Corinth." The local congregations or called out assemblies of Christians in the province of Galatia went far wrong in doctrine and were very much like Seventh Day Adventists, teaching salvation by the law instead of by grace. Yet they were called "the churches of Galatia." For that reason it is foolish to claim that only the congregations of your own denomination are churches. Some Baptists say that Methodist congregations are not churches. Others with the same denominational vanity are sometimes guilty of the same sin. But if Israel at Mount Sinai was a church, if the mob at Ephesus was a church, and if the Christian congregations in the New Testament were churches, in spite of their false doctrine, then any congregation of Christians is a church in the Bible sense.

IV. The Body of Christ, Including All Christians, Is a Church

The word "church" in the Bible sometimes refers to that great assembly of Christians to be called out at the second coming to meet Christ in the air and to be assembled in Heaven. Hebrews 12:22, 23, plainly says that this great assembly of the spirits of just men made perfect, who will be gathered in the presence of an innumerable company of angels and of Christ, is a church. It will be a called out assembly and therefore literally a church in the Bible sense. This certainly does not refer to any human denomination, but refers to all the saved.

Hebrews 12:22, 23 says:

"But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.

"23. To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."

Here the inspired apostle tells Christians that they must face now, not Mount Sinai and the whole assemblage of Israel gathered there when the law was given,

but they must face a far greater assemblage in Heaven. That Heavenly assembly of "the spirits of just men made perfect," the "general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven," will be a church. It will be a called out assembly, will be made up of all the saved called out of the world to meet Jesus in the air and then assembled in Heaven.

First Thessalonians 4:16, 17 tells about how this assembly will be called out to meet Christ in the air and that it will include both the Christian dead and Christians then living.

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

"17. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

First Corinthians 15:51, 52 tells in different words the same story:

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.

"52. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

Old Testament Saints, With All Other Christians, In This Church

Taking the passages quoted above at face value, we can see that all the saved will be in the rapture at the second coming of Christ. First Thessalonians 4:16 says that "the dead in Christ shall rise first." Not part of the Christian dead but all the dead in Christ will be in that rapture. Verse 17 adds, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them . . ." Not part of the Christians who remain alive, but all of them who remain alive, will be caught up to meet Christ in the air, and will be in this called out group which will be assembled in Heaven.

First Corinthians 15:51, 52, is even more positive in stating that every Christian will be changed, glorified, with resurrection bodies, at this time. Notice two statements given there, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall ALL be changed," and "the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Every person who has ever been saved will be changed and given a resurrection body when Christ comes for His saints; first the Christian dead and then the Christian living. Then all together will be caught up in the air to meet Christ and will be assembled at the Heavenly Jerusalem.

That Heavenly assembly, then, is called in Hebrews 12:23, quoted above, "the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven." That great gathering is properly called by the Scriptures a church since it is a called out assembly.

Remember that this assembly is not made up of local congregations of Christians. The unit here is the individual Christian. For example, Judas Iscariot was a member of a local congregation but being unsaved he certainly will not be in this assembly in Heaven. On the other hand, Abraham was not a member of any local congregation of Christians, but since he is one of the dead in Christ, and the Scriptures tell us that "the dead in Christ shall rise first," then Abraham will be in that Heavenly assembly, that church of the firstborn, as will every other Christian saved up to that time. That church or Heavenly assembly will not be made up of any one denomination nor of all the denominations, but of individual saved souls, without respect to whether they were members of any local congregation or church. No denomination is that church, though many claim to be. No denomination is a branch of that church. No local congregation is a branch of that church. Every saved person is counted a member of that church which will be assembled in Heaven at the second coming of Christ.

That "General Assembly and Church" Now Being Formed As the Body of Christ

To distinguish between that heavenly assembly and other

churches, Ephesians 1:22, 23 calls it "the church, which is his body." Colossians 1:18 says that Christ "is the head of the body, the church." As you read the Bible with an open mind, it becomes clear that Christ is now forming or building that body which will be called out at His second coming. Although this body is not yet assembled in Heaven, called out physically from this earth, yet they are all a part of the same "body of Christ," and God's Word, looking forward to the rapture, calls this body a church.

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The term "will build" would be more clearly translated "will be building." Jesus did not say that at a particular date He would "organize" or "institute" or "found" or "begin" His church. Local congregations are founded, organized, instituted or begun, but that is not what Jesus was talking about here. His apostles were already called out and assembled with Him in a local congregation and He did not here refer to that or any other local congregation, but to that body, the church, which will be called out at the rapture. Jesus said here in effect that He would be building or forming this body or church until the time it was called out. If you will keep clearly in mind that the word "church" never means denomination or group of congregations, then it will not be hard to see what Jesus meant here.

Jesus is building that church today. First Corinthians 12:12, 13, tells us that every Christian has been baptized (buried) into this body.

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.

"13. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

When the Holy Spirit regenerates a sinner so that he is "born of the Spirit," the same Holy Spirit then buries this new-born Christian into the body of Christ. Baptism is a burial. When people are baptized in water we expect them to come out of the water, but when the Christian is baptized into this body of Christ, he is sealed in there by the Holy Spirit and becomes a part of that body. Thus Christ is building His church by the addition of new converts as "lively stones." First Peter 2:4, 5, tells how people come to Christ, the living stone, and are built up as lively stones into a spiritual house:

"To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious.

"Ye, also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house."

This Spiritual house is the church or body which Christ is building now and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. Ephesians 2:19-22 tells us how the saints at Ephesus are built into this "spiritual house," "household of God," "building" and "holy temple."

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

"20. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

"21. In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.

"22. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Notice that the same language is used here as in Matthew 16:18. Jesus said there, "I will build my church." Here we are told that the saints "are built" and then we are told that the "building" "groweth unto an holy temple." Christ is now building this church or body which will be called out at the rapture and assembled in Heaven. Every saved person is a member of this body. This is a precious truth. It does not pander to denominational pride and vanity but tends toward Christian love and fellowship for all the children of God.

Only One Body, Not Two
Some people believe that that

Heavenly assembly will include two different groups of people, two separate bodies, one body to be the bride of Christ, and another body to be guests at the wedding. Such people usually believe that those of their own denomination and name will be the "bride" and that saved people of other faiths will be "guests" but not equal to the bride. This is a vain and hurtful teaching which is not anywhere taught in the Word of God but is born of denominational pride.

The Scripture expressly states that there is only one body. Ephesians 4:4 says:

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling."

That body is mentioned many, many times in the Scripture but always in the singular. There is but one "body of Christ." There will be just one assembly of the saved in Heaven when Christ comes and receives His saints. Do not think there will be a line between your denomination and others at that time. There will not. Do not think there will be a separation between you and Old Testament saints at that time. There will not! There is one body and only one and that includes all the saved.

Sometimes the rapture of the saints, caught up to meet Christ in the air, is illustrated in the Scripture by a wedding. But when the wedding guests are mentioned, the bride is never mentioned (Matt. 22:1-14). When the bridesmaids are mentioned, no bride is mentioned (Matt. 25:1-13).

In Ephesians 5:23-33 the relation of husband and wife is likened unto the relation between Christ and His church, but there no other group is mentioned. It takes many illustrations to picture the glory that will be ours when we see Jesus. But these illustrations do not mean that we will be divided into separate bodies as a bride, bridesmaids, guests and servants. For example, Jesus is mentioned as "the Lamb of God," "the Lion of the tribe of Juda," "the bright and morning star," "the root and the offspring of David," etc. But all these refer to the same Christ, not different Christs. So all the illustrations of Christians at the rapture refer to one body.

"When Was the Church Founded?"

Many people are greatly concerned over the question of when the church was founded, organized, instituted, originated, or begun. They argue much about it and yet the Bible never says one word on the subject of the date! All the trouble is caused by misunderstanding the word "church." If you mean this body of Christ which Jesus is now building, then it was never founded or organized. It did not begin at Pentecost. It is not a human organization, so it never needed to be organized. Jesus is building it and that is enough. He does not even tell us in the Bible when He began building it. Since Adam will be in it, if he was saved outside the garden of Eden, then we suppose that Jesus began building this body when He saved the first man. But since the Bible does not set a time as the birthday of the church and makes no issue about it whatever, we will do well to follow the Bible example. The date of "the founding of the church" is unimportant anyway, unless you are seeking to prove that the church Jesus mentioned is your own particular human denomination. It is enough to believe what Jesus expressly stated, that He is building that body and it will be complete at the rapture of the saints. After that, people saved on earth during the tribulation period, and Jews saved after we return with Christ to reign on the earth, will be saved and on an equal basis

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with others saved before, but they will not be called out to meet Christ in the air and so will not be a part of the church.

Notice carefully that the Bible never refers to the church as a body, after the assembly in Heaven. When we come back to reign on the earth we will no more be a called out assembly, a church. Then we will be a kingdom, not a church.

I hope it has become clear from this study that Scripturally local congregations are churches and that all the saved who will meet Christ in the air form an entirely separate body, the church and body of Christ. Denominations are not churches in any Bible sense.

Never use the word church, then, about a denomination. Do not say "the Roman Catholic church," or "the Baptist church." There are many local churches, but no denomination is that, and in the Bible the word "church" is never used about denominations. The world has been cursed by the example and teaching of Roman Catholicism in many ways. The Roman Catholic idea of a great human denomination and organization which is to be the bride of Christ, is an utterly false idea. They claim that their human organization, heading up in the Pope, is the bride and body of Christ. Episcopalians, copying them, claim their denomination is the bride of Christ, the true church. Churches of Christ, or Disciples, sometimes make the same claim. Baptists sometimes very foolishly claim that the Baptist denomination, made up of Baptist churches, is the bride of Christ. That is using the word church as Roman Catholics do, in a wholly unscriptural sense. Remember that the Bible teaches that Roman Catholicism would be the mother of religious abominations in the earth (Rev. 17:5). To teach that some denomination is the church of Christ appeals to human vanity and pride, but it is utterly untrue to the Scriptures.

The Church, the Body of Christ, Was Not Born at Pentecost

Smith's Bible Dictionary sums up the belief of many when it says, "Just as the appearance of God on Mount Sinai was the birthday of the Jewish nation, so was Pentecost the birthday of the Christian church" (article "Pentecost"). But in this case *Smith's Bible Dictionary* is mistaken, as I think I can show. Dr. Smith had in mind that the church, the body of Christ, was an organization, which it is not. That view-point is natural for a church of England man, but is not scriptural.

The notes in the Scofield Bible seem to take for granted that the church was founded at Pentecost; but that view is based upon a false conception of what the church is. For instance, Dr. Scofield's note on First Timothy 3:15 says, "Church (visible), Summary: The passages under this head (I Cor. 10:32; I Tim. 3:15), refer to that visible body of professed believers called, collectively, 'the church,' of which history takes account as such, though it exists under many names and divisions based upon differences in doctrine or in government."

This idea that denominations are branches of the church and that "that visible body of professed believers," or any other visible group is called "the church" in the Bible is utterly wrong. What popes and bishops and denominational leaders down through the centuries have organized and called historically "the church" is never called the church in the Bible.

Where did the idea start that the church was born at Pentecost? It grew out of this unscriptural conception of the church. If there was a denomination it had to be organized. If the church and body and bride of Christ is what Catholics mean by those terms, then of course it would have to have an origin and its birth would be a public matter, a historical matter.

But the word *ekklesia* literally means a called-out assembly. It does not mean an "organized" assembly. That word translated "church" in Acts 7:38, "the church in the wilderness," referring to Israel in the wilderness, pictured an unorganized and motley group. Israel was a "called out assembly" as

soon as they gathered outside of Egypt. It did not take Mount Sinai nor the Mosaic law, nor consecration nor ceremony to make them into a called-out assembly. So Israel in the wilderness is called in the Bible, a church.

In Acts 19, verses 32, 39, and 41, that idolatrous mob, called together by Demetrius the silversmith, to murder Paul, is called an "assembly," in both the King James and Revised Versions. But in the Greek it is really the word for church, *ekklesia*. That mob, called out against the preaching of the gospel, was a called-out assembly, a church in literal Bible language. For in every other chapter in the New Testament, but this one, the word *ekklesia* is always translated "church."

That shows that a church doesn't need to be organized or founded or born — in order to be a church — it is simply a called-out assembly.

A local congregation of Christians called together is a church.

Israel in the wilderness called out of Egypt is a church.

A howling mob called together at Ephesus is a church.

And so all the saints of God, all those who were ever born again whose names are written in Heaven, will at the rapture constitute a church. Literally, then, the saints of God will be a called-out assembly, meeting in the heavenly Jerusalem.

Note these reasons why the church could not have been founded at Pentecost, as many people believe.

1. In all the discussions in the New Testament about Pentecost and what happened then, not a single word is said about the church being born then. Such an idea is not mentioned in the 24th chapter of Luke where Jesus commanded the disciples to "tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." The idea of the birth or origin of a church is not mentioned in the first chapter of Acts where Jesus "commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me . . . ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:4, 5).

The second chapter of Acts, which tells in such glowing detail the happenings of that glorious day when the Holy Spirit came upon the people and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and three thousand people were added to the church — that chapter does not even hint at the origin of a church.

References to Pentecost in Acts 11:15-17 or in Hebrews 2:4 do not hint that the church was founded at Pentecost.

2. The instructions of Jesus to His disciples long before Pentecost, that if the erring brother would not hear two or three who come to reprove and treat, that they should "tell it to the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican" (Matt. 18:17), indicates that the local group of called-out disciples was recognized as a church long before Pentecost. If there was a church at Pentecost, it was, of course, a local group, but it was not the first time the group was called a church. Even the local church at Jerusalem was not founded at Pentecost.

3. The universal church, composed of all believers, the body and bride of Christ, could not have been born at Pentecost because of its very nature. First, that body of Christ is slowly building. It "groweth into an holy temple," the Scripture says (Eph. 2:21). Christ said literally, "I will be building my church." Every new convert is like a stone laid upon a wall, covered with mortar and with other stones, and so buried or baptized into the body. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 2:5). A house is not born — it is built, and Christ is building His church. What is the origin of a house? Is it when the first stone is laid or when the house is finished? If it is when the first stone is prepared, then the first soul ever saved in the world was the origin of the church. If it is when the house is finished, then it will be at the rapture when all the saints of

God are called out "unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven . . ." (Heb. 12:22, 23). The material for this called-out assembly began to be prepared with the first soul saved, whether Adam or Abel. (I think it was Adam.) But the church will not be literally called out until the rapture. To artificially put a birth-date for the body and bride of Christ anywhere between the beginning and the end, is unscriptural. Pentecost was not the birth-date of the church.

4. The fourth proof that the church was not born at Pentecost is the serious misapplication of Scripture which people must make in trying to prove it. Note the weakness of the proof. First, they think of the church, the body of Christ, as a human, visible, earthly organization, with the denominations as "branches of the church." This is a wholly unscriptural idea, which was adopted from the Catholic position thoughtlessly. But with that idea of an organization with human officers, people try to find a starting place. Peter preached at Pentecost and Catholics say that Peter was given the keys of Heaven and could let people in or keep them out, that Peter is the first pope of the Catholic church and that their church, which they call the true church, so began at Pentecost. Then other denominations which sprang from the Catholics, claim to be branches of the true church, so they also claim that the church began at Pentecost. With that background, they look for Scripture to prove it. And all they find is First Corinthians 12:13 which says, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." Jesus promised that at Pentecost the disciples would be baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5). This verse (First Corinthians 12:13), says that "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." So people who already want an earthly organization founded at Pentecost, teach that this means at Pentecost everybody who would ever be saved, was "symbolically" or "legally" or "potentially" baptized into the body of Christ.

How foolish is this interpretation! Actually, First Corinthians 12:13 has no reference whatever to Pentecost or to what happened there. This interpretation confuses two entirely separate things. At Pentecost, Jesus Himself poured out the Holy Spirit to cover (and so baptize), and fill the disciples with soul-winning power. That was the meaning of Pentecost (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). But when souls are saved, the Holy Spirit takes new converts and buries them into this body like stones built into a wall, and they become a part of the body of Christ. Christ baptizing one already saved in the Holy Spirit for soul-winning power, is an entirely different thing from the Holy Spirit placing new converts into the body of Christ.

Paul wrote to the church at Corinth and said in effect, "All of us have been placed by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ when we were saved, and the Holy Spirit has come into our bodies to stay." He was speaking of the time when each one was saved and he had no reference to Pentecost.

Nor is there a single verse in the Bible that teaches that the church was formed at Pentecost.

After the doctrine is formed, then people find, they think, a symbolical meaning in the wave-loaves of the Jewish Old Testament Pentecost, which seems to them to picture the church, though the Scripture never gives it that meaning.

The artificial division between New Testament saints and Old Testament saints which is made by so many modern Bible teachers, is contrary to the Scriptures. Salvation has been the same in all ages. People were saved by exactly the same gospel in the Old Testament times, then under the preaching of John the Baptist, then in the personal ministry of Christ, and later in the book of Acts and in the times after Pentecost. And when Jesus comes for His bride, to call out all of the redeemed, He will get all His church. The called-out assembly, the *ekklesia*, will include every person who ever trusted Christ in any age.

How important that we remem-

"But the Spirit Departed"

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

to do so, I would call the ceremony off and they would have to get someone else."

So we find that the first reason the Spirit of God left Saul and came upon David was in the matter of Saul's disobedience.

Our Lord told the story of two sons. One came to his father and the father said, "Go into the fields," and the boy replied, "Sir, I go not," and yet he repented and went. The other son came to his father and the father said, "Son, go into the fields," and the boy answered, "I go," but he went not.

Jesus turned and asked, "Which did the will of the father?" The answer was obvious. The man who said first of all, "Sir, I go not," but later turned and went was the man who did the will of the father. And Jesus pointed out that even harlots and publicans and sinners are going to go into Heaven ahead of some church members who call Him "Lord" and do not the will of the Father.

Now let's turn to the second reason. The second reason why the Spirit of God left Saul. Samuel tells why: "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king." So the second reason was because he rejected the Word of the Lord.

The other day in Seattle we had an ordination service. I was acting as examiner on that particular day. The young man sat in front of me to be ordained. I happen to be a Baptist so I turned to ask him a very pointed question. I asked him this: "My friend, I would like to ask you this one question. Suppose that in the years that lie ahead, as you study the Word of God you should be convinced from the Bible that the stand you have taken is the wrong stand and that you ought to be in some other denomination or that you ought to be in some other line. We are ordaining you as a Baptist minister. Supposing the Word of God reveals to you that is dead wrong. What would you do?"

He turned to me in amazement. He was in a tough spot. He looked me in the face and said, "Sir, if the day and hour ever comes when the Word of God reveals to me I ought to cease to be a Baptist, I will follow the Word of the living God."

I acquiesced, "You are dead right. If you had given me any other answer, I would not have ordained you. Your faith doesn't rest on denominations; it rests on the Book."

But we turn and find that Saul rejected the Word of the living God. There are only two entities in all the world called the Word of God. One is the Lord Jesus Christ, and the other is this book which I hold in my hand. So important is this book that it is the carbon copy in pen and ink of what He was in flesh and blood, a living book to be obeyed because the living Word is a more sure Word of prophecy than even the Father's voice itself speaking from Heaven. All right. Let's turn and see how we ought to obey. We will find the answer in the Word of God. We ought to search it. Never once did Saul inquire of the Lord, but again and again we find that David inquired of the Lord. Some men and women never sit down and open their Bibles to see what God says about gossip. Church members do more harm with their tongue than if they were drunkards, but we do not control our tongues. They never sit down and open the Word up and find what it says about lying, dishonesty or cheating or liquor or envy or pride or covetousness, and the Spirit of the living God cannot come upon men and women who do not search and bow to the Word of God.

In Seattle, Washington, I had a

ber, then, that we are blood-brothers to every born-again one, every child of God. Denominational differences may be matters of sincere and honest conviction. But they must never keep us from feeling that every born-again child of God is a brother or sister beloved, a fellow member with us of the body of Christ and to be lovingly regarded as a member of the household of faith.

funeral service a little while back. I shall never forget it until the day of my death. The undertaking parlor called me. "Will you conduct the service of a man who is not a member of any church?"

I said, "That is all right," and as I came out to the funeral parlor I found the undertaker in a dither. "Mr. Darbee, this man has three wives. The last one isn't here. The second one isn't here, but the first one is. The first wife is here and some of the children by his third wife. Now are we going to read them as survivors or not?"

"Never mind that. Leave that to me."

"Would you like to see the ex-widow?" and he took me in where the first wife was. Turning to her, I asked her, "Is there any hymn that your husband had as a favorite?"

She answered, "No, he didn't know any hymns."

"Is there any Scripture verse he would have liked to have read?"

"No, he hadn't any use for the Bible."

But the man's mother turned to me and said, "Oh, preacher, I wish you could understand my boy. His God was just a great big God of nature. When Sunday came he always played golf. He liked to get close to God that way," and she went on to say, "My dear boy, he was a man who loved people." I knew that! Three wives! Nobody

(CONTINUED ON PAGE FOUR)

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"But the Spirit Departed"

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE THREE)

needed to tell me that. Then I turned and asked, "Had he ever turned Christ?"

"Well, no, he hadn't ever done that."

I stepped on the outside then to think things through. A man with a fishy look in his eye and a suit on like a cheap gambler came over where I was sitting. "Preacher, listen, you have heard about what a rascal this man was. You heard how he quit one woman and then another and another. You heard how he cheated and stole." (If he had kept his trap shut, I would never have known that.) "You know all these things." Then he added, "But he is a lodge brother of mine." He said, "We have the first half of the service, and we don't want any discord here. Put Him into Heaven, won't you?"

Boy, oh, boy! I went in to the service. They took the first part of the service. Everyone stood for the tolling of a mystic hour.

Then they preached him into Heaven on a boat with sails of hammered gold. After that they turned to three liars who sat on the front seat. One said, "He always paid his debt." Another said, "He had taken the vow of the lodge and had been true to his vows." Another testified that he was a citizen of the United States and gave to charity. I presume that had he been a Swede he could never have made it! Then the chaplain moved over to the head and I sat there holding my breath. "Oh, Lord, Thou who dost receive the spirits of just men made perfect, Thou hast heard the word of that brother and that brother and that brother. Receive thou now the soul of this our dearly departed dead. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

Then they turned the service over to me. I got up with the Word of the living God in my hand and read:

"I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."

When those words "no hope" rang out, there in the mourning room that widow shrieked out, "No hope! No hope! No hope!" There was silence. Those three men at the front, and the man who led the ceremony were white as death. Then I gave them the word of the straight gate and the narrow way that leads to life and few there be that find it. I may not have come out the most popular man in the world, but at least they heard, at my hand, the Word of God. If you stand by the Word of God the God of the Word will stand by you.

All right, let's turn to the next thought. Saul was rejected because there was failure to confess his sin. Listen to Saul. He said, "I have sinned: yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord thy God." In other words, he said, "I don't care what God thinks of my sin so long as I look all right in the sight of the people."

Let's turn to another man, Jacob, wrestling with the Lord Jesus Christ in the hours of the night. As day breaks Christ tries to break away from him but he would not let Him go. He demanded of Jacob, "What is thy name?" Jacob answered, "My name is Jacob. My name is crooked. My name is cheater. My name is supplanter," and God answered him, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." And later when Esau came with 400 soldiers to murder him, to take his

life, he looked out across the plains and saw Jacob limping toward him. He was crippled for life. Esau was out of contact with God, but he saw the glory of God right on Jacob's face. Esau took one look and saw that Jacob was a changed man. He had confessed his sin, and Esau, the would-be murderer, fell on his neck and kissed him.

Let us turn to the one last point. Not only did Saul reject the Word of God, not only was he disobedient, not only did he fail to confess his sin, but there was the sin of presumption. He stepped into the priest's office when he had no business to step. There isn't anything God won't do through any man if the man will touch not the glory. Preachers take note. No man can at the same time give the impression that he is clever and that Christ is mighty to save. The Spirit of God comes only on exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Saul was absolutely refused in the hour of presumption, rejected from being king.

Now let us look at David. The Spirit of God came on him early. We note some fifteen or twenty times that "David inquired of the Lord." "David inquired of the Lord." "David inquired of the Lord." Saul never once inquired of the Lord.

Turn yet again. When David sinned and he found out he had sinned and it was brought to his attention, he didn't turn and say, "Honour me now before the eld-

ers." He said in reality, "What do I care about the elders? Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." Then listen to his heart-broken prayer. "There were three steps to it. Number one: 'Renew a right spirit within me;' Number two: 'Take not thy holy spirit from me.' The Spirit of God had been taken from Saul. Saul was cast away so far as his service was concerned. I don't mean that he lost his soul. No man can do that, for Christ keeps those who trust Him, but he lost the power of the Holy Ghost. David said, 'Take not thy holy spirit from me . . . uphold me with thy free spirit.' Now listen to the last part: 'Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.' Someone says, 'How can a sinner be converted to the Lord Jesus Christ?'"

Long, long years ago Abraham started toward a distant altar. We find him with his boy, Isaac. As the two went toward that distant altar we find that Abraham drew off the back of the donkey a load of wood and put the wood upon the shoulders of the boy. I used to think that the wood that he carried up to Mount Moriah was a type of Jesus Christ carrying the cross. But wood in the Scripture has a deeper significance than a cross. Wood means sin. If you will open up your Bibles to the thirtieth chapter of Isaiah, you will find Hell is described as a vast wood pile, and the breath of the Al-

mighty "like brimstone doth kindle it." So Abraham put on the back of Isaac a mighty load of wood. In his right hand was a torch: "Our God is a consuming fire." We see them as they go to the altar and there we find Isaac — he knew that sooner or later a Holy God must judge sin so he turned to his father and asked this heart-broken question: "Father, here is the wood, there is the fire, but where is the lamb?" In other words, he said, "Father, isn't there some sacrifice that can come between me and the fires of the Holy God?" A sacrifice that day was provided, but both knew that the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin. Down through the weary years the heart-cry of poor, condemned, helpless, warring, sinning humanity remained the same, "Here is my sin; there is the wrath of a holy God. Is there not something to come between?"

Centuries later John the Baptist answered the question for all time when on the banks of old Jordan as he beheld Jesus coming unto him he cried, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." He mounted Calvary's brow with our sins upon Him, not in Him, since He knew no sin — but as our sin-bearer. And the pent-up wrath of God, seeking for sin to punish, found its unerring way to Him, and, thank God, the judgment of my sins was visited upon Him. Hotter and hotter came the fires from Heaven upon the

defenseless head of the Great Sufferer there — until the fuel was gone. Our sins were completely judged: "Calvary was burned over completely by the wrath of God."

"But," you ask, "where are my sins now? What has become of them?"

In the Old Testament in the days preceding the cross we read of sins being separated from men "as far as the east is from the west." In this day of the airplane that distance may no longer seem so far and it may leave us troubled. We read that they were cast behind His back, but suppose, oh, suppose God should ever turn around? Suppose that even reading that they would be "blotted out" does not fully satisfy my heart. Suppose they should remain on the blotter? But in Hebrews, chapter one, we read that "he by himself purged our sins." That word *purged* means "burned up!" We stand this noon on an earth marked for judgment, but the one place of safety is the place once for all burned over by the wrath of God.

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." If you want Jesus as your sin-bearer, you have his Word in Romans 10:9-10, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

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